

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 1097 without my signature.

The original academic content standards were adopted through a public and inclusive process involving teachers, educators and content experts from around the state. The authorizing statute provided that the Governor retain a majority of appointments to the Standards Commission, followed by the Superintendent and leadership in the legislature and correctly held the Governor ultimately accountable to ensure a balance of expertise and stakeholders participated in such a critical endeavor. This bill proposes to dilute the role of the Governor.

SB 1097 also deletes a provision codified by the original statute that explicitly authorized the State Board of Education (Board) to modify any proposed content standards prior to adoption. Instead, it only allows the Board to accept or reject proposed changes. The Board would not have authority to make even minor corrections to the panel's recommended changes.

I see no compelling reason to alter the balance established by the original statute in determining the composition of the commission that reviewed the academic content, or the process that provided for recommendations to the Board for consideration, modification, and approval.

Furthermore, while I would welcome participation by teachers, the measure does not define "recent public classroom experience" and thereby raises the possibility of controversy regarding whether or not certain members of the panel are duly authorized to participate.

I cannot support the dilution of the authority of the Governor or the State Board of Education. California's content standards are too important to allow for unnecessary ambiguity that could call into question the very process of a historic review and possible modification.

For these reasons, I am unable to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger